

Architectural Monuments during Mughals Rule

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Abstract: *There was an incomparable architectural activity in India under the Mughals rule. The traditions in the field of architecture, painting, literature and music created pleasure during this period. The Mughal emperors were keen lovers of nature and art and their personality was, to a certain extent, reflected in the art and culture of their time. Under their patronage, all arts particularly architecture, painting and music made special progress and all kinds of artists used to receive encouragement from the state. The Mughal emperors were great builders. So, the Mughal period is regarded as the 'Golden Age of Architecture' in the Indian history. The Mughals, their empire, their warriors and their affairs, both of love and war, no longer exist, but their buildings that tell even today the story of their capability and personality, have immortalized them for all times. We can imagine how great builders the Mughals have been by seeing their buildings that are found even to this day. The objectives development under the Mughal Empire.*

Key Words: *Architecture, Mughal empire, patronage, mansion, Fort.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

With the advent of the Mughals Indo-Muslim architecture reaches a unity and completeness which make the story of the architectural style that developed under their august patronage particularly fascinating and instructive. The Mughal emperors were keen lovers of nature and art, and their personality was, to a certain extent, reflected in the art and culture of their time. The Mughal emperors were very fond of art. Under their patronage; all arts particularly architecture, painting and music made special progress and all kinds of artists used to receive encouragement from the state. Aurangzeb was the only Mughal emperor who considered it more creditable to finish art altogether instead of encouraging it. In reality, he was completely deficient in the natural inclination towards art. With this sole exception all other Mughal emperors exhibited their particular taste for the development of art and tried their utmost to promote it.

The Mughal emperors were great builders. This is why the Mughal period is called the 'Golden Age of Architecture' in the Indian History. The Mughal rulers were very fond of building great mansions. The mansions built by them astonish many a visitor even today owing to their vastness, durability, beauty and delicacy.

In the words of the famous Persian poet, Sheikh Saadi, "He who leaves behind him such great monuments as temples, bridges, tanks and canal never dies." How well these words of the poet suit the Mughal emperors' monuments, such as royal palaces, mosques, tombs etc. The Mughals, their empire, their warriors and their affairs, both of love and war, no longer exist, but their buildings that tell even today the story of their capability and personality, have immortalized them for all times. We can imagine how great builders the Mughals have been by seeing their buildings that are found even to this day.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To study the architectural monument under the Mughals. (from Babour to Aurangzeb.)
- To examine the special features of the Mughal architecture.
- To analyze the architectural changes brought by the Mughal rule.

3. RESEARCH METHODS:

Selections of the Mughal Architecture are based on the past literature and various data collected from books and journals.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUGHALS :

The Mughal Empire was a great Muslim power in the Indian Subcontinent. The existence and achievement of the Mughal Empire was regarded as a jewel in the Islamic civilization. According to Bakar (2000), the Mughal era can be divided into two, namely the era of consolidation and glory (1526-1707) and the era of decline and downfall (1707-1857). He stated that the Mughals glorious era can be observed during the first half of the empire's history when the

Indian region was ruled by Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir; Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The second half of the Mughal's period witnessed the decline of the Mughals, particularly after the demise of Aurangzeb in 1707 at a time when the Mughal empire was weak and besieged by serious resistance from the Hindus, power struggle among the royals, weakness and incompetence of the rulers and invasion and intervention by foreign powers, particularly from Europe. (Bakar 2000, Ishak 1992).

With the year 1526, when Babur the Mughal king of Kabul, with the aid of 700 field-guns, defeated the vast army of the Sultan of Delhi on the plain of Panipat, we enter on the Mughal period of architecture, which lasted nominally until 1761, but which may more conveniently end for our purpose at the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The Muslim buildings of these two centuries form a more distinctive and homogeneous group than the architecture described hitherto, which varied greatly from province to province, and they are more familiar to foreigners, all of whom have at least heard of the Taj Mahal. The term 'Mughal' as applied to architecture has its drawbacks, but the fact remains that the buildings erected under the Mughal emperors were more definitely Muhammadan in character than those which preceded them and need to be classified as a separate school. The chief monuments were erected by Akbar (1556-1605) and Shah Jahan (1628-58); during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) architecture progressively declined.

4. DISCUSSION :

4.1 Buildings of Babur:

The Mughals built magnificent forts, Palaces, gates, Public buildings, mosques, baolis (water tank or well), etc. They also laid out many formal gardens with running water. In fact use of running water even in their palaces and pleasure resorts was a special feature of the Mughals. Babur was very fond of gardens and laid out a few in the neighbourhood of Agra and Lahore. Babur erected many buildings in places like Agra, Sikri, Bayana etc. Babur himself writes in his memoirs, "I engaged about 680 stone-cutters everyday at Agra alone to work in my palaces while about 1496 masons (workmen) worked in my building operations at Agra, Sikri, Bayana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Aligarh." There are only two buildings built by Babur that are extant and which remind us about the Mughal architecture even today. One of them is a mosque in the Kabuli Bagh of Panipat.

and the other is also a mosque situated at Sambhal, a town in Rohelkhand. Both of these mosques were built in 1526 A.D. In both these buildings, Persian influence is clearly visible. The Persian influence that began to be felt on the Indian art in the time of Babur went on increasing till the reign of Akbar.

4.2 Buildings of Humayun and Sher Shah:

The whole of Humayun's life was spent in warfare and coming face to face with strifes and conflicts. He at last met with reverses and had to run from pillar to post. Thus he had no time to pay attention to the development of art. Otherwise he had a great love for the art of building like his father Babur. Despite so much tussle and struggle in his life, he built a palace, named 'Din Panah' for himself which was probably destroyed by Sher Shah Suri later on. Two mosques built by him, one at Agra and the other at Fatehabad in Hissar district, still survive in a dilapidated condition. The mosque at Fatehabad is enamelled with painted and enamelled tiles after the Persian manner and thus is worth seeing from the artistic view point.

Sher Shah Suri did not fall behind the Mughals in any way in the field of architecture. He brought into being some unique specimens of architecture. He built a fort, named Rohtas, on the bank of the Jehlum river. He also founded a city at Delhi in which he erected beautiful buildings. In the old fort of Delhi there exists even today in its perfect beauty and glory. The mosque usually called Qila-i-Kuhna Masjid built by him. The most significant of Sher Shah's buildings in his own town which he had built himself in his life time at Sasaram in Bihar. This tomb stands on a platform 30ft. high in the midst of a lake. In respect of it in the words of Dr. V.A. Smith, "It is one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India unequalled among the earlier buildings in the northern provinces for grandeur and dignity". Another prominent historian, Cunningham believes it to be more beautiful than the Taj. The outward shape of this tomb of Sher Shah situated at Sasaram, is of Muslim style but the internal part is adorned with pillars of Hindu fashion and other ornamental works. The Mughal architectural style began as a definitive movement under Humayun's son and successor, the great Akbar, and it has been affirmed, possibly with some amount of truth, that Akbar received the inspiration for his own architectural projects from the group of buildings produced under the intelligent and enlightened patronage of Sher Shah. That the style of his buildings was influenced, to a certain extent at least, by the strong and revived architectural tradition that flourished at the imperial capital during Sher Shah's regime.

4.3 Buildings of Akbar:

In the region of Akbar, the Mughal architectural style, as an individual and distinctive tradition, may be said to have begun. He undertook various building projects in different parts of his empire and was responsible for the initiation and direction of a vigorous programme of building activity that was assiduously continued by his successors. The mausoleum of Humayun at Delhi supplies an important landmark in the history of the building art of the Mughals as heralding the new movement. Erected by his widow, Haji Begum, during the early years of Akbar's reign, it is one of the most striking monuments of Indo-Muslim architecture. The building itself is supported on a wide square platform, 22 feet in height, with gracefully arcaded sides. The arches recall the Persian design and form and the piers are ornamented with inlays of white marble emphasizing their graceful lines. The white marble dome of Humayun's tomb shows also certain new features in its shape as well as in its structural conception. In shape it offers a significant contrast to the low-pitched and broad-based domes of the earlier styles. On the structural side we find here for the first time the correct and logical application of the double dome, an expedient that is known to have been in use in western Asia for a considerable length of time.

In Akbar's reign very vast and sky-scraping buildings were erected at several places, such as Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi, Lahore, Allahabad, Attock etc. The Agra fort was built under Akbar's own supervision. He had built various buildings including Diwan-i-Aam, Dewan-i-khas, Jahangiri Mahal and Akbari Mahal are more prominent. The Lahore Fort was also erected by Akbar who adorned it with many additional buildings as in the case of the Agra Fort. Another fort of this kind was also built by Akbar at Attock. The most prominent creation of Akbar was Fatehpur Sikri which had been his capital also from 1569 to 1584 A.D. Akbar utilized all his resources to adorn this new city. This city was subsequently named Fathpur after Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1572. The conception of the new imperial headquarters, it is recorded, is connected with the circumstances that attended the birth of prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir. Shaikh Salim Chishti, lived at Sikri who foretold the birth of a son to Akbar who would survive the emperor.

Among the Mughal miniature we have more than one painting representing the building of Fatehpur Sikri. This work is completed under the supervision of the emperor, possessed of an imperious and untiring energy, that was responsible for the lightning rapidity with which the work was pushed on, and it is his own artistic taste and ideals that endowed the city with so great an amount of charm and magnificence. It became a centre where poets and musicians, historians and theologians, artists and craftsmen all together under the benevolent patronage and inspiring leadership of the emperor.

We can see even today countless buildings of Akbar at Sikri that still survive. Of them the Buland Darwaza, Jama Masjid, Diwan-e-khas, Panch Mahal, Palace of Jodha Bai etc. are more significant. It is at this place that Akbar had built the Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti also which is famous throughout the country, for its holiness and beauty. Many art critics like Fergusson, V.A Smith, Lanepoole are of the opinion that a town like Fatehpur Sikri will perhaps never be built again.

Akbar also got built a fort of Allahabad in which he also erected many other buildings as in the case of Lahore and Agra forts. Of these buildings the 'Palace of Forty pillars' is very well-known for its beauty and art. Akbar's own tomb built by him at Sikandara is another beautiful specimen of Mughal art. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "But the most characteristic of Akbar's building is the tomb at Sikandara which is unique among the sculptures of Asia." The plan of this tomb was prepared in Akbar's life-time but this tomb was finished in the reign of Jahangir. These buildings of Akbar are famous even today for their vastness and strength.

4.4 Buildings of Jahangir:

Jahangir was rather more inclined towards painting and planting of gardens rather than architecture. Consequently, buildings erected by him are not so imposing as those built by his father. Even then, two buildings built during his reign the 'Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula' at Agra and 'Akbar's Tomb' at Sikandara. The Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula was built by Nur Jahan in the Memory of her father at Agra. It is built of pure, white marble and is decorated with precious multi-coloured stones. Though its planning seems to be defective, yet it is unique in respect of its beautiful execution and from it we come to know about Nur Jahan's love for the art and architecture. The second famous building of Jahangir's reign is Akbar's tomb at Sikandara which Jahangir had himself got completed. Its plan or sketch was though got drafted by Akbar in his life time, yet it was got constructed by Jahangir in 1613 A.D. It is built five stories diminish in size as they are built one above the other. Dr. Ishwari Prasad's view is that in the beginning there was a proposal to cover it with a marble dome, and if it had been executed, it would have been the most eminent tomb in the world, next to the Taj. Another building of Jahangir's reign is his own mausoleum at Shahdara near Lahore. Though its plan was drawn up by Jahangir himself, yet it was got built by Nur Jahan. It is adorned with multi-coloured stones, white marble and enamelled tiles but its former beauty has disappeared because in the first place it is situated so near Ravi and secondly, much of its costly material was removed during the Sikh rule in Punjab.

4.5 Buildings of Shah Jahan:

Shah Jahan was a great builder. His reign was the golden age of the art and architecture of the Mughal period. There are beauty and delicacy instead of vastness and view in his buildings, and white marble and used in them in place of red stone. In order to increase the beauty of roofs and walls, gold, silver, diamonds, precious stones and multi-colored stones were used. The figures of trees, natural scenery and birds were also painted on them. Shah Jahan adorned his empire with countless splendid buildings. Of these buildings the Taj Mahal at Agra, Moti Masjid in Agra Fort, Musomman Burj at Agra, the new city of Shah Jahanabad, Red Fort, and Jama Masjid at Delhi, Mausoleum of Jahangir at Shahdara near Lahore, the peacock throne, pleasure Gardens in Lahore and Srinagar etc. are very famous. The historians called Shah Jahan by the name of the 'prince of builders' on account of such a large number of mansions built by him.

In 1638 Shah Jahan began at Delhi the construction of a new capital city, that of shahjahanabad, to contain within its perimeter a sumptuous palace fortress for the accommodation of the imperial household and court. The city build on the right bank of the river Jumna, with the palace at the apex of the river and the grand congregational mosque, the Jami Masjid, at an angle formed by two wide streets transversing from the main gates of the fortress to the city gates.

Two buildings, representative of the style an idea of the grandeur and brilliance of their sumptuous palace conception. The Diwan-i-khas and which is an indispensable features of Mughal court life and etiquette. And the other is the Rang Mahal, intended for the delectation of the emperor and his household after a busy and tiring day.

The Diwan-i-khas, also known as the Shah Mahal, is an open colonnaded hall of one story enclosed at the back by marble trellises. The building is entirely in white marble and lavish ornamentation distributed over every available space in brilliant colour, lustrous gold and costly Pietra dura. The grand Jami Masjid at Delhi, the largest and most well-known in the whole of India, forms also an essential element of the scheme of the city of shah jahanabad. It was completed in 1658 when Shah Jahan had already ceased to reign. It is of the usual orthodox plan of an open courtyard with ranges of cloisters on three sides and the prayer chamber on the west. Another mosque was build at Agra, just outside the Delhi Gate of the fort. It is said that Shah Jahan built it in order to please his favorite daughter, the accomplished princess Jahanara.

But all the above architectural creations of Shah Jahan are thrown into shade by the superb conception of the mausoleum that the emperor raised up at Agra to enshrine the mortal remains of his beloved consort, Arjumand Banu Begum, better known as Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal, as it is called after the title of the empress, stands on an elevated ground on a bank of the river Jumna, so that it has a fine view from whatever angle it is seen. In the construction of the Taj the builders also show a perfect mastery of technique, as is evident in every lineament of this show-white misty pile. The solid foundation and the substructure of the terrace on the river front are, in themselves, feats of remarkable engineering skill.

4.6 Aurangzeb and the decline of architecture

After the death of Shah Jahan the art of architecture began to deteriorate very rapidly. Aurangzeb had neither an inclination towards architecture nor had he so enormous funds at his disposal to patronize this art. He got built a mosque of marble inside the Red Fort in Delhi for his personal use and another is Banaras on the ruins of Vishwanath Temple. The Badshahi Masjid in Lahore was also built by Aurangzeb. This mosque is, of course, a vast one but it is quite simple in its construction and does not absolutely stand in comparison with the 'Jama Masjid' of Delhi. The decline of architecture, that started during the reign of Aurangzeb, continued in the time of the later Mughals. After Aurangzeb's death, anarchy spread throughout the empire and the Mughal emperors could not afford time or money to pay any attention to the growth and development of this art.

The tomb of Aurangzeb queen Rabi'a-ud-Daurani at Aurangabad illustrates in a pathetic manner and the rapid deterioration of the Mughal architectural style. Erected in 1679 it is a frank imitation of the Taj Mahal at Agra, though on a much smaller scale. The difference between this tomb, known as the Deccani Taj Mahal, and shah Jahan's masterpiece is striking in view of so short an interval that separated the two monuments, and shown in a effective manner.

5. CONCLUSION:

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the grand empire vanished under a maze of fratricidal struggles ignominious internal intrigues and intrepid foreign aggressions. With it collapsed also the splendid pageant of the Mughal court. The life and spirit of the Mughal architectural style had already gone and the outer shell also collapsed. The tomb of safdar Jang at Delhi, erected about 1754, is the final effort to recall the old spirit of the style, but in this it fails miserably. There was no hope of recovery even of the old glamour, and the architectural style, associated with the name of the grand Mughals became extinct long before the last of the dynasty was pushed out of his titular sovereignty.

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